

Department of Planning and Budget 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** HB287

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Habeeb

3. **Committee:** House Committee on Appropriations

4. **Title:** Mediation; increases fee paid to mediators appointed in certain cases.

5. **Summary:** Increases from \$100 to \$120 the fee paid to mediators appointed in custody, support, or visitation cases. The bill provides that, where a referral includes both custody or visitation and child or spousal support, the referral is considered to be two separate appointments.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, Item 44

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary (see Item #8)

8. **Fiscal Implications:** This legislation would increase the fee paid to mediators in custody, support and visitation cases from \$100 to \$120 per case. According to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court (OES), there are roughly 15,150 cases per year on average that require mediator services. Using this average, the expected fiscal impact of increasing the mediator fee is \$303,000 a year.

The legislation would also bifurcate custody/visitation cases from support cases allowing the mediator to charge a fee for each issue even if both are handled in the same mediation. Assuming an average of 2,585 additional cases, the expected fiscal impact of this provision would be \$310,300 a year. The Governor's introduced 2016-2018 Budget Bill provides \$310,300 a year to cover the cost of this provision.

9. **Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Courts

10. **Technical Amendment Necessary:** No

11. **Other Comments:** None